



## Program 1-D

### Eclipse-City along China's Ancient Silk Road From Kashgar to Hami

Eclipse-City is happy to announce its extended China eclipse-program.

Our extended 2008 eclipse program for China will take you primarily to China's Northwestern Uyghur Autonomous Province of Xinjiang.

Xinjiang is the largest political subdivision of China - it accounts for more than one sixth of China's total territory, a quarter of its boundary length, but only 1.5% of its total population. It is divided into two basins by the Tianshan Mountain range. Dzungarian Basin is in the north, and Tarim Basin is in the south. Xinjiang's lowest point is located in the Turfan Depression, 155 meters below sea level (second lowest in the world). Its highest peak, K2, the second highest mountain in the world, is 8,611 meters above sea level, at the border with Pakistan.

This tour, based around our core program (1A), emphasizes even more the historical richness of the Silk Road in the Xinjiang province. We will travel some 2,000 km by comfortable tourist coach busses along China's Silk Road and experience unforgettable highlights, such as the view of crystal clear high altitude lakes surrounded by snow-capped mountains, drive along the world's second lowest point in Turpan Basin, visit ancient caves with Buddhist paintings, shop in multi-ethnic bazaars, witness stunning sand dunes, watch and/or ride the famous Barkol horse or camels and of course, enjoy more than 2 minutes of totality in our specially built camp in the Gobi Desert.

You will be accompanied by our multilingual staff, bilingual local guides, and of course, astronomy experts from the international community as well as from Urumqi Observatory. We have personally inspected all hotels, 2 to 4 stars depending on the visited locations. Our "Kazakh Eclipse Cities" will be ashore lake Balikun and on "the dunes", on our viewing site, both incredible locations. Full board and an award winning show and eclipse gala dinner, will make this trip, an unforgettable experience.

The Olympic Summer games start on August 8<sup>th</sup> 2008 in Beijing. We do therefore strongly recommend to place your bookings for the tour as early as possible.

Welcome again to Eclipse-City

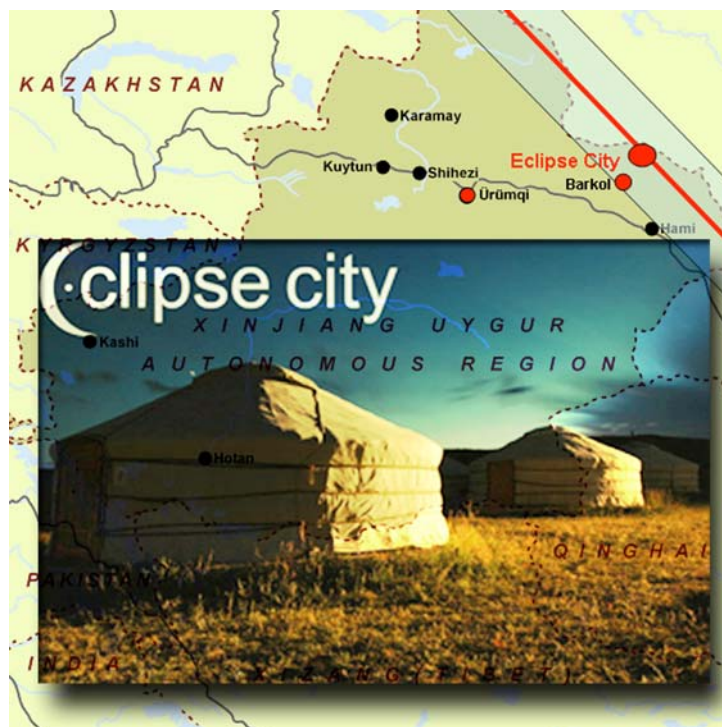
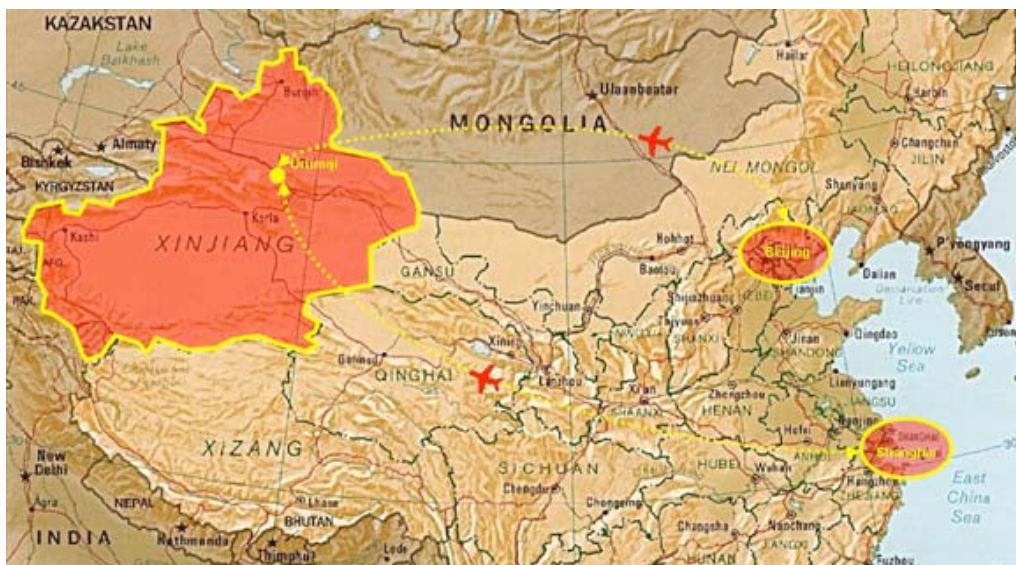
A handwritten signature in red ink that reads 'Hederia Thollan B.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Managing Director  
Eclipse-City Ltd.  
*Where the moon mates the sun*



## Program 1-D

### Eclipse-City along China's Ancient Silk Road From Kashgar to Hami



---

**Program 1-D: 14-day program ex Beijing (China)**  
*Monday July 21<sup>st</sup> – Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008*

**Euros 3,789.- p.p. (single supplement policy applies)**

**Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 – Beijing**

Arrival in Beijing in the morning from your home country. Depending on your arrival, we will pick you up and bring you to your hotel.

In the afternoon we will drive you into your first Beijing impressions: visit of **Tiananmen Square**, and **Temple of Heaven**.

Tiananmen was built in 1417 in the Ming Dynasty. In 1699 (early Qing Dynasty), Tiananmen was renovated and renamed to its present form. During the Ming and Qing eras, there was no public square at Tiananmen, and instead the area was filled with offices for imperial ministries. These were badly damaged during the Boxer Rebellion and the area was cleared to produce the beginning of Tiananmen Square.



The square is 880 meters south to north and 500 meters east to west, a total area of 440,000 square meters, which makes it the largest open-urban square in the world.

Near the centre of today's square, close to the site of the Mao Zedong Mausoleum, once stood one of the most important gates of Beijing. This gate was known as the "Great Ming Gate" during the Ming Dynasty, "Great Qing Gate" during the Qing Dynasty, and "Gate of China" during the Republic of China era. Unlike the other gates in Beijing, such as the Tiananmen and the Qianmen, this was a purely ceremonial gateway, with three arches but no ramparts, similar in style to the ceremonial gateways found in the Ming Dynasty Tombs. This gate had a special status as the "Gate of the Nation", as can be seen from its successive names. It normally remained closed, except when the Emperor passed through. Commoner traffic were diverted to two side gates at the western and eastern ends of today's square, respectively. Because of this diversion in traffic, a busy marketplace, called Chess grid Streets developed in the small, fenced square to the south of this gate.

In the early 1950s, the Gate of China (as it was then known) was demolished along with the chess grid streets to the south, completing the expansion of Tiananmen Square to (approximately) its current size.

The **Temple of Heaven**, literally the Altar of Heaven, is a complex of Taoist buildings situated in southeastern urban Beijing, in Xuanwu District. Construction of the complex began in 1420, and was thereafter visited by all subsequent Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is regarded as a



Taoist temple, although the worship of Heaven, especially by the reigning monarch of the day, pre-dates Taoism.

After the peasant rebellion that obliterated the Ming Dynasty, a peasant shot an arrow into the sign.

The Temple grounds covers 2.73 km<sup>2</sup> of parkland, and comprises three main groups of constructions, all built according to strict philosophical requirements.

The Earthly Mount is the altar proper. It is an empty platform on three levels of marble stones, where the Emperor prayed for favourable weather; the House of Heavenly Lord, a single-gabled circular building, built on a single level of marble stone base, where the altars were housed when not in use; the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, a magnificent triple-gabled circular building, built on three levels of marble stone base, where the Emperor prayed for good harvests.



In ancient China, the Emperor of China was regarded as the "Son of Heaven", who administered earthly matters on behalf of, and representing, heavenly authority. To be seen to be showing respect to the source of his authority, in the form of sacrifices to heaven, was extremely important. The temple was built for these ceremonies, mostly comprised of prayers for good harvests.

Each winter solstice the Emperor and all his retinue would move through the city to encamp within the complex, wearing special robes and abstaining from eating meat; there the Emperor would personally pray to Heaven for good harvests. The ceremony had to be perfectly completed; it was widely held that the smallest of mistakes would constitute a bad omen for the whole nation in the coming year.

The Temple of Heaven is the grandest of the four great temples located in Beijing. The other prominent temples include the Temple of Sun in the east, the Temple of Earth in the north, and the Temple of Moon in the west.

According to Xinhua, in early 2005, the Temple of Heaven underwent a 47 million yuan (5.9 million USD) face-lift in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics and the restoration was completed on May 1st, 2006.

The Temple of Heaven was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1998.

Dinner and overnight in Beijing.

## Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 – Forbidden City and Great Wall

In the morning we will visit the Forbidden City and its palaces; in the afternoon we will exit Beijing to the Great Wall (130 km outside of Beijing) and the famous 13 Ming tombs and "Avenue of Souls".

The **Forbidden City**, literally "Purple Forbidden City", was the Chinese imperial palace during the mid-Ming and the Qing Dynasties. The Forbidden City is located in the middle of Beijing, China. It is now known as the Palace Museum. Its extensive grounds cover 720,000 square meters (approximately 178 acres) and is composed of 800 buildings with 8,886 rooms.

The Forbidden City, listed by UNESCO as the largest collection of preserved ancient wooden structures in the world, was declared a World Heritage Site in 1987 as the "Imperial Palace of the Ming and Qing Dynasties".

The Palace Museum in the Forbidden City should not be confused with the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan island. Both museums derive from the same institution, but they were split after the Chinese Civil War.



**The Great Wall** of China or literally "The long wall of 10,000 Li" is a series of stone and earthen fortifications in China, built between 5th century BC and the 17th century to protect the northern



borders of the Chinese Empire during the rule of successive dynasties. Several walls, referred to as the Great Wall of China, were built since the 5th century BC, the most famous being the one built between 220 BC and 200 BC by the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang; this wall was located much further north than the current wall built during the Ming Dynasty, and little of it remains.

The Great Wall is one of the existing mega structures and the world's longest man-made structure, stretching over 6,352 km (3,948 miles) from Shanghai Pass in the east to Lop

Nur in the west, along an arc that roughly delineates the southern edge of Inner Mongolia.

Late evening flight to Urumqi and overnight in Urumqi.

### Wednesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008 – Beijing, Kashgar and Lake Karakul

Early morning flight to Kashgar (Kashi). Upon arrival in Kashgar we board a motorcoach and head for lake Karakul in the Pamir Mountains.



Karakul Lake (meaning "black lake" in Kirgiz language) is located approximately 200 km from Kashgar on the famous Karakoram Highway, before reaching Tashkurgan and the Khunjerab Pass on the China - Pakistan border. At an altitude of 3,600 meters it is the highest lake of the Pamir plateau, near the junction of the Pamir Mountains, Tian Shan and Kunlun Shan mountain ranges. Surrounded by high mountains, which remain snow-covered throughout the year, the three highest peaks visible from the lake are the Muztagh Ata (7,546 m), Kongur Tagh (7,649 m) and Kongur Tiube (7,530 m).

The lake is popular among travelers for its unreal scenery and the clarity of its reflection in the water, whose color ranges from a dark green to azure and light blue. There are two Kyrgyz settlements along the shore of Karakul lake.

Overnight in yurts at Lake Karakul.

### Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Lake Karakul

After an early breakfast, you will enjoy an early morning camel ride and/or hike up to the 4,450 m **Muztagh Ata base camp**. Those not feeling well enough because of the altitude can rest for the day or enjoy a hike around the lake.

The hike up, i.e. one way, will take about 5 hours and lunch will be taken at the base camp. Depending on the weather and our arrival time at the base camp it may be possible to go a bit higher on the way to Camp I. We will return back to lake Karakul shortly before sunset and have dinner.

Proper clothing and hiking shoes are required. While on the mountain you will be asked to follow the instructions of your tour leader at all times.

Overnight in yurts at Lake Karakul.



### Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Kashgar (Kashi)

After breakfast we'll travel back to Kashgar and start our day visit in this famous oasis city at the crossroads of the Northern and Southern forks of the Ancient Silk Road. Virtually all westbound traffic in silk, spices, tea, jade and porcelain lumbered through Kashgar streets during the Silk Road's 1000-year run.

The **Id Kah mosque** is the largest one in China. Every Friday, it houses nearly 10,000 worshippers and may accommodate up to 20,000.



The mosque was built by Saqsiz Mirza in 1442 (although it incorporated older structures dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century) and was often rebuilt, the last time in 1860. The current mosque was built in 1798 and though it reflects the original's overall design, it's been greatly embellished and expanded. It covers 16,800 square meters and consists of the Hall of Prayer, the Doctrine-Teaching Hall, the gate tower, a pond and some other auxiliary structures.

Some 140 highly-decorated green pillars support the ornate roof, lavishly decorated with floral motifs. Within the mosque is a tree-shaded courtyard and pool, where worshippers may cleanse their bodies before prayer.

During the visit you should always remember that both men and women should always have their arms and legs fully covered.



The **Grand Bazaar** of Kashgar, next to the Id Kah Square, is our next stop. Other markets are also in the surrounding streets, such as a carpet market and a hat market. The mixture of people of different ethnic backgrounds from all over Central Asia descending on Kashgar to trade and buy various wares give the market an incredible atmosphere, so it is worth braving the crowds.

Construction of the **Abakh Hoja Mausoleum** began in 1640. The mausoleum houses the remains of five generations from one family, beginning with an Islamic saint, Yusuf Hoja.

The tomb is actually a series of tombs, ranging in style from elegantly simple to simply over-the-top elaborate.

It is a great symbol to both the Uigur and Han peoples for different reasons and is also known as the Tomb of Xiang Fei (Tomb of the Fragrant Concubine), the only Uigur concubine among the 41 wives of Emperor Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).



## Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Dive Into the Magic of Multi Ethnic China

Fly back to Urumqi in the morning to merge with the other groups of Programs 1A, B and C. You will be transferred to your hotel and have time to freshen up before dinner time.

Urumqi is the capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the most 'inland' city in the world. With a population of two million gaily-dressed ethnic inhabitants, the city is likened to a piece of emerald embedded at the foot of the Tianshan Mountains. It lies in the lofty ice-capped Bogda Peak and vast Salt Lake to the east; in the rolling pine-covered Southern hill, a well-known scenic district, to the south; and in the alternating fields and sand dunes of Zunggar Basin to the northwest.

The temperature in Urumqi widely ranges between day and night as it belongs to the semi-arid continental climate of middle temperate zone. The climate is extremely arid due to long period of sunlight and bare precipitation. It has shorter spring and autumn; and longer winter and summer. May to October is the golden season for traveling to Urumqi, when flowers are in full bloom and the fruits, like melons, are ripe with its fragrance. Although all of China observes Beijing Time, we should indicate that there is a two hours time zone difference between Xinjiang and Beijing. The local working hours starts usually from 09:30 or 10:00. You'd better not start your travel plan before 08:00 in the morning since it is still dark at that time.

Tourist resources of Urumqi have its own advantages and distinctions, which are strategically important in the ancient Silk Road that assembles the cultures of both eastern and western countries.



In recent years, the city of Urumqi has continuously developed its economy, industry, culture as well as tourism and transportation. Nightlife in Urumqi provides multiple-range of choices such as watching

the ethnic sing-and-dance show, tasting native delicacies in the night market, or simply hanging out in bars. Coming to Urumqi will not let you return to your country empty-handed. Shopping in the International Grand Bazaar is a pleasant experience. Bargain hunting for handicraft souvenirs such as rugs, carpets, Uygur-style hats, knitted sweaters, ethnic costumes, hand-made embroideries and jade carvings, will definitely draw your intense interest.

After freshening up, we will enjoy an overwhelming **Dance and Dinner-Event at the Uygur district**.

## **Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Heavenly Lake and Dinosaur Valley**

After taking your breakfast you will head for **Heavenly Lake** (Tianchi), on the north side of Bogda Peak, 110 km (68 miles) east of Urumqi. Covering 4.9 square kilometers (1.89 square miles) at 2,000 meters above sea level, this crescent-shaped lake deserves its name, Pearl of Heavenly Mountain (Tianshan Mountain).

In summer, the beautiful lake is an ideal cool resort. Boaters on the lake see the ever-changing silvery mountains soaring into the blue sky, their slopes highlighted with verdant pasture and flamboyant wild flowers. Fishing at dusk has its own special charm. A day in this fairyland promises restoration.

Heavenly Lake, a relic of the Quaternary Period Glacier and its surrounding geological relics, offers science lovers exploring opportunities.

As if the natural beauty of Heavenly Lake were not enough, legend adds a mysterious touch. It is said that the West Queen (Xi Wang Mu) entertained King Mu of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1100 B.C.-771 B.C.) at the Lake. The West Queen fell in love with the king and asked him in her poem, 'The white clouds drift while the mountains reach the blue sky. Passing thousands of mountains, crossing ten thousands of rivers, you come to us from a faraway place. If you are still strong and fine, would you like to come back to us again?' The king answered in his poem, 'After I go back to central China and lead the people to a prosperous life, I will come to you again'. We do not know why the king never returned. Only the placid lake and the silent mountains witnessed the lovesickness of the West Queen.



We will enjoy lunch at a typical yurt restaurant in the surroundings of Heavenly Lake and continue our journey to the "Petrified Wood" area in the Karamaili Mountains and **Dinosaur Valley** (Jimsar).

At evening hours you have the choice of enjoying a lecture by Dr. Na Wang (Director of the Urumqi Observatory) or alternatively enjoy Dinner at a typical Chinese Restaurant in town. For those of you who want to enjoy the lecture, we have limited availability and cold evening snacks. Please book your lecture ahead of time.

## **Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Urumqi-Sightseeing and Bazaar Shopping**

After breakfast, we will visit the **National Museum**. The display of ancient mummies is fantastic, for it was in this region that a great number of ancient and well-preserved remains were discovered. These are quite different from the mummies in Egypt that were created by skilled embalming procedures; the Xinjiang corpses were dried by the particular natural environment. The 'Loulan beauty' is almost 4,000 year old and among the best preserved in the world.



We will then visit **Red Hill**, which is a symbol of Urumqi, owing to its uniqueness. The body of the mountain, made up of aubergine rock, has a reddish brown color, hence, the name Red Hill. The hill is 1.5 kilometers (0.93 mi) long and 1 kilometers (0.62 mi) wide from east to west.

Less than 1km away, Yamalike Hill stands facing Red Hill. Legend has it that in ancient times a red dragon fled from Heavenly Lake and the Heavenly Empress caught him and sliced him in two with her sword. Later on, a hill was formed by each half of the dragon. The western hill is Yamalike Hill and the eastern one is Red Hill. The sword turned into the Urumqi River. Oddly enough, topographic pictures tell us the two hills were once one and were separated into two parts due to stratum rupture.

Eventually, ancient legend affected real life. In 1785 and 1786, floods hit Urumqi causing much destruction. Rumors arose that Red Hill and Yamalike Hill were growing closer and closer together. Once they met, the Urumqi River between the two hills would be blocked and the city would become flooded as the water rose. Therefore, in 1788 Shang An, the highest military officer, ordered the Zhen Long (*in Chinese, to subdue the dragon*) Pagodas built on both hills. These two pagodas were made of gray brick, 10.5-meter (34-foot)-high with six sides, nine stories, and an octagonal roof.



From the Red Hill peak, you will have the whole city of Urumqi before your eyes!

We will then go on a shopping tour through the **International Bazaar** and have **lunch in a typical Uygur restaurant**.

Now we leave the Urumqi region and begin our journey towards the South West, directly to the Turpan oasis, one of the key points of the ancient Silk Road.

Late arrival at Turpan hotel, check-in and dinner.

## Tuesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 – The Turpan (*Turfan*) Region

Our day starts early with the visit of the one of the world's architectural wonders that hides in Yarnaz Valley, 10 kilometers (6.2 mi) west of Turpan. Like a willow leaf, the ancient city of Jiaohe (Yarkhoto) with a history of 2,300 years lies between two rivers on a loess plateau atop a cliff of over 30 meters (98 feet). **The largest, oldest and best-preserved earthen city in the world, Jiaohe** is 1,650 meters (5,413 feet) by 300 meters (984 feet) at its widest; with an area of 220,000 square meters (2,368,168 square feet).

Jiaohe was the capital of the former Cheshi State. An Indian proverb says, 'Intelligence is bound to exist where two rivers meet'. Jiaohe, meaning in Chinese *where two rivers meet*, is such a place. According to historical records it was home to 700 households, 6,500 residents plus 865 soldiers.



Jiaohe distinguishes itself from other ancient cities owing to three features. First, it had only two city gates, the South and East Gates. The main South Gate vanished long ago, leaving a huge breach. The East Gate cut by the cliff was virtually non-existent. Second, the city faces cliffs on three sides, so there are no city walls commonly seen in other ancient cities. Third, all the buildings were dug from earth, and wood was rarely used. The central avenue, 350 meters

(1,148 feet) long, runs north from South Gate, separating the city into three parts; namely, residences for common people, temples, and residences for aristocrats. To the west of the avenue, low buildings with sparse small temples were residences for commoners, while the high ones in the east were for aristocrats and troops. At the end of the avenue stands a large well-preserved Buddhist temple, Jiaohe Temple, with an area of 5,000 square meters (53,824 square feet).

The relics we see today featured Tang Dynasty (618-907) architectural style. Houses were dug downward from the earth, and as no house gates faced the streets, military defense was apparently priority.

At the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, the city was tossed into the reigns of the Turpan, Hui, and Mongols. Residents fled from the destroyed city continuously until in the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the city was abandoned, as was its glory and prosperity of over 2,000 years. Miraculously, owing to the arid climate and remote location, the ancient city of Jiaohe remains intact, leaving us a rare exemplar of an earthen castle.

We then drive to **Grape Valley** to have lunch (alternatively lunch at Flaming Mountains). "...Grapes in Turpan grow up; Anarhan's heart is ecstatic..." This folk song of the last century is well known in China. Turpan, a place truly flowing with milk and honey in the Turki language, is famous for its fruits. Among them, grape is the most famous. Every August the sweet air will herald the vintage. The best place to enjoy the grapes is Grape Valley. This green paradise of 400 hectares (988 acres) is covered with layer upon layer of grapes. It seems that all the water in the desert of Turpan flows into the Karez Systems in the Grape Valley. Every single grape is crystal and watery-some are as green as emerald; some as red as agate, some as small as pearls while others are like olives. Among dozens of kinds of grapes, Wuhebai (white seedless) grape is reputed as a green pearl with the sugar content as much as 22%.



We continue our journey and visit **Flaming Mountain**. This is very popular thanks to a classical novel, *The Journey to the West* by the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) writer, Wu Cheng'en and its charming hero: The Monkey King. In the Han account of the legend, it is said the Monkey King stirred up trouble in Heaven and kicked off the oven for making immortal pills. Charcoals fell from the sky to where the Flaming Mountain now lies: In the middle of Turpan Basin. According to the Uygur version, a vicious dragon lived in deep Tianshan Mountain and ate little children. A Uygur hero fought gallantly against the dragon for three days and three nights and cut the dragon into eight parts. The remains of the dragon turned to a scarlet mountain colored by its blood. The eight scars turned into the eight valleys in the Flaming Mountain, including the famous Grape Valley.

Scientific explanation cites tectonic plate movement on the earth's surface during the formation of the Himalayas 50,000,000 years ago. The mountain is barren and extremely hot in summer. During the trek approaching the mountain, visitors will find the soles of their shoes soften in the intense heat. With the red sun overhead, the red mountain looks like a fiery dragon-truly an unforgettable spectacle!

As Buddhism was the first religion from abroad introduced to this area, Xinjiang witnessed the earliest development of Buddhist cave art in China. Soon after the religion's establishment in the region, Turpan became the Buddhist center on the Silk Road owing to its geographic location. Among the Buddhist caves found in Turpan, Bizalkik Thousand Buddha Caves are considered most valuable.

**Bizalkik Thousand Buddha Caves** stand high on the cliffs of west Mutou Valley under the Flaming Mountain, 45 km (28 miles) east of Turpan. Of the 83 original caves, 57 caves currently remain. The murals cover an area over 1,200 square meters (12,917 square feet) in more than 40 caves.

Beginning in the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the construction experienced Tang, the Five Dynasties, Song and Yuan. The Caves had been the Buddhist center of Gaochang. Near the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the royal family of Gaochang moved to Yongchang, Gansu. Around this same time, Buddhism in Turpan began to decline in popularity with the introduction of Islam. Subsequently, the religious importance of The Bizaklik Thousand Buddha Caves became less apparent. Many of the caves were destroyed during the ensuing religious clashes. Vandals dug out the eyes of many of the portraits human figures contained in the murals. Later, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, foreign explorers robbed the caves of much of the treasures. Despite all the destruction, the surviving parts, such as the delicate Buddha seat and the bright color of the murals, give us some idea of its past glory.



Bizaklik Caves was the royal temple of Huihu (the predecessor of today's Uygur) State and the existing caves were enlarged or renovated during that time. The murals take us back to the ancient Huihu State, where we can see the King and Queen and people from all walks of life. The inscriptions, written in ancient Uygur, Chinese and other languages, provide authentic reference for valuable historic research.

The most exceptionally rare mural topics in Bizaklik Caves are found in Caves No.16 and 17. Cave No.16 depicts a musician playing Xiao Hu Lei: a lute-like instrument originating from southern China's Yunnan province. This strengthens the belief that cultural exchange between northern and southern China was unprecedented during Tang Dynasty.

The mural *Transformation in Hell* in Cave No.17 supports the notion Huihu Gaochang was the center of Manicheism from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century.

*Buddhist disciples wailing in mourning* and *Bhikku wailing in mourning* in Cave No.33 are also highly praised for their vivid depiction.

In addition to the murals and inscriptions, a piece of gold foil wrapping paper found at the caves is also intriguing. A stamp on it revealed the address of the shop on the south side of Tiahelou Street, Hangzhou, Zhejiang of Song Dynasty. It also advised clients to examine their goods carefully before purchase to avoid being cheated. As an apparent piece of advertisement, the foil shows that Gaochang Huihu kept close economic ties with Song Dynasty as the trade extended as far as to the East China Sea.

After a full day of impressions we take the dinner at the hotel or another typical place.

Overnight in Turpan.

## Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup> 2008 – The living Desert

We start our day with the **Su Gong Tower**. Emin Minaret is the largest extant old tower in Xinjiang; it is the only Islamic tower among the hundred famous towers in China.



Standing 2 kilometers (1.2 mi) east of Turpan, Emin Minaret was built in 1777 in honor of the heroic Turpan general, Emin Khoja. He was an outstanding patriot who defended the unification of China throughout his life. He had eight sons but the eldest son died of illness at a young age. Influenced by Emin, all his remaining sons made contributions during the war against Jungar rebellions. It was Suleyman, Emin's second son, that built this minaret with his own money. This is the reason why the minaret is also named Su Gong Ta. Upon Emin's death, Suleyman inherited his father's rank and became the second Turpan ruler.



At the entrance to the minaret, two steles were set up. On one is a Chinese inscription which explains that the purpose of building the minaret was to show gratitude to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and to commemorate exploits of Emin Khoja while the Uygur inscription on the other stele gave thanks to Allah.

The historical background of Emin Minaret is underlined by the architectural significance. The 44-meter (144 feet) high minaret has no stories. From the base with a diameter of 10 meters (33 feet), the minaret tapers to an Islamic dome. In the center of the minaret is a brick-piled pillar with 72 steps around it spiraling to the top. There are 14 openings for ventilation and lighting that are located in different directions and at various heights. On the top, there is an attic of 10 square meters (107 square feet) with large windows on the four sides through which the marvelous landscape could be admired. Unfortunately, tourists today cannot climb to the top due to the protection given to the minaret.

However, the unique exterior of the minaret will make up for this lack. The huge column made of grey bricks and earth would be dull if not for its decorative patterns. Smart Uygur architects used bricks to form 15 different patterns such as waves, flowers or rhombuses. What's more, the architects even took the surroundings into consideration. Set against the azure sky, silvery Tianshan Mountain and the scarlet Flaming Mountain, Emin Minaret displays a pristine but dignified air. Only when you look up at the minaret will you find how crystal blue and high the sky of Turpan is!

Right beside the minaret stands **Su Gong Ta Mosque**, one of the largest mosques in Xinjiang. The grand mosque can accommodate 1000 people despite the inconspicuous appearance. The idea behind this is also intriguing; the mosque is neither so glaring as to defeat the minaret nor too humble as it is a worship center. The circular Emin Minaret and the square mosque are in sharp contrast without losing harmony.

46 kilometers (29 mi) southeast of Turpan near the 'Flaming Mountains' sit impressive ruins of the ancient city of **Gaochang**. Built in the first century B.C. and originally called Gaochangbi, it used to be a garrison town and later became a key point along the ancient Silk Road. By the seventh century it held sway authority over 21 other towns and the practice of Buddhism led to the establishment of many monasteries and temples. In the ninth century, the Uigur established the Kharakhoja Kingdom here and Manicheism flourished. The city was burnt down around the 14th century, during a period of warfare that lasted 40 years.

The ruins originally consisted of three parts: the inner and outer cities, and a palace complex. The outer city extended 5.4 kilometers (3.4 mi) long with 11.5-meter (38-foot) high and 12-meter (40-foot) thick enclosure walls. Sections of the tamped earth were reinforced with adobe. Nine city gates were built at cardinal points; three in the south and two in each other three directions. Visitors are usually suggested to enter the best preserved gate in the west to the core.

The inner city is a 3-kilometer (1.9 mi) long rectangle, of which the western and eastern sections are well preserved. Sharing its southern wall with the inner city, the Palace City is in the northern part of the inner walls. A square adobe pagoda called 'Khan's castle', which means 'Imperial Palace', stands

on a high terrace in the very north. Somewhat to its west, a half-underground, two-storied structure is supposed to be the palace ruins. Several earthen platforms are still visible.

Two temples remain, one in the southwestern and the other in the northwestern parts of the outer city are worth a visit. The first one, 130 meters (427 feet) long from east to west, 85 meters (279 feet) wide from south to north covers 10,000 square meters. It consists of an arched gate, courtyard, a lecture hall, a library of sutras, a main hall and the monks' dormitory. It is said that Xuanzang the renowned Buddhist monk of the Tang period had lectures here in the year of 628 on his way to India. The second is smaller but the murals remains are impressive. The city was brought under the protection of the state in 1961.



We continue our journey to Kumtagh Mountains with its famous high sand dunes and camel riding. Kumtagh desert carries the meaning of "sand mountain" in local Uygur language. The desert has Lop Nor in Tarim Basin, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to its west, Dunhuang city in Gansu province to its east, eastern part of Tianshan Mountains to its north and Arjin Mountain to its south. The topography here is various, the wind-sediment landform and form of dunes diversified. The views are stunning ! Apart from Yadan topography, trellis dune, barchan, honeycomb dune, pyramidal dune, star dune and linear dune, the unique feather-shaped dune can also be found here. In consideration to the extremely arid climate, deep and thick sand bed, little vegetation and high mobility of dunes there, Kumtagh desert suffers the harshest natural condition in the arid regions in northwest China.

Connected to the Taklamakan, China's largest desert in the west, Kumtagh Desert in Shanshan County is the most accessible desert in Xinjiang and the only desert that borders a city in the world.

We will have dinner and overnight at Shanshan Oasis.

## Thursday, July 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 – Hami and Eclipse City at Barkol Lake

We start with an early drive to Hami and the visit of the **Hami Uygur Kings**. Today, Hami is the Eastern gateway to Xinjiang, a rich oasis in the midst of a seemingly endless desert and famous for its melons, the Hami Melon. Historically, Hami has always been an important part of the Silk Road, occupying one of the few fertile spots between the Gansu Province and Turpan. Marco Polo once noted with evident pleasure the locals' habit of not only supplying guests with food and shelter but also allowing them to sleep with their wives...

We will not sleep in Hami, but visit the Mausoleums of the Hui Kings. From 1697 to 1930, Hami was nominally controlled by Muslim (Hui) kings. After the death of these rulers, they were all buried in the tomb complex, which comprises a number of domed mausoleums in Islamic styles, as well as a mosque.



After enjoying lunch in Hami, we will continue our journey to **Barkol** Kazakh Autonomous County, where we will stay for two nights in our specially built Eclipse City or our exclusively booked hotels. Barkol is famous



for its camel and horse breeding. The Barkol horse is famous throughout China,

Also, due to the large number of camels, which is unparalleled in China, the county carries the nickname of "county of the thousand camels". Our Eclipse City will be built ashore the beautiful and temperature pleasant Barkol Lake, with an unparalleled view on the Lake and the clear peaks that shadow from the Eastern Tian Shan.

Dinner will be served at the hotel or in our specially built Eclipse City Restaurant.

## Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 – Eclipse Day: 2 Minutes and 1 Second of Totality

We begin our day with a hearty breakfast. After breakfast, we will head for our specially built day camp in the Gobi Desert, just 90 minutes drive away. It is all there for you:

Camel riding, lunch and beverage service, balloon riding and much more.

There is ample space in the Gobi Desert, so you can now choose your own vantage point in this exceptional surroundings. Eclipse-City is the only provider in China offering more than 2 minutes of totality along with the best weather prospects along the 2008 eclipse path.

Get ready for

**1<sup>st</sup> Contact at 18:06:30 (altitude 31°, azimuth 265°)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> contact at 19:05:43 (altitude 21°, azimuth 275°)**

Mid eclipse will occur at 11:06:44 UTC (19:06:44 Standard Beijing Time). More than 2 minutes of totality. Considering our location, we expect a spectacular and immaculate totality view over the Gobi Desert's horizon, with the distant Eastern Tian Shan Mountains in the background.

**3<sup>rd</sup> contact: 19:07:45 (altitude 20°, azimuth 275°)**

**4<sup>th</sup> contact: 20:02:45 (altitude 11°, azimuth 285°)**



After you have packed all your belongings, we will proceed back to Eclipse-City, which is just 90 minutes drive away. While we drive you, you will enjoy the sundown, relax and have your thoughts reviewing your rich day's experience.

Back at our *Eclipse City*, you may want to freshen up, change and get ready for our **Eclipse Gala Dinner and Show**



---

A delicious, varied and beautifully arranged Gala Buffet will be awaiting you. Find your friends or make new ones and get ready for our Gala Show: Xinjiang artists are there to entertain and show us their cultural diversity!

### **Saturday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008 – The Day After the E-Day**

After a typical Eclipse-City breakfast, we will head back for Urumqi, some 600 kilometers away. We will enjoy lunch in/around Turpan and arrive late afternoon or early evening in the capital of the Uygur Autonomous Region.

In Urumqi, we shall enjoy dinner in a typical Uygur restaurant.

Overnight in Urumqi.

### **Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008 – Farewell**

After enjoying breakfast, you will be taken to the airport for your flight back to Beijing where you should arrive in the afternoon to continue your onward journey.

---

**Programs 1D** is meant for all clients wishing to experience the 2008 total solar eclipse at the best and longest viewing location in China and includes an extended stay in Beijing and a short visit to Kashgar and the Pamir Mountains. In addition, the program offers a number of high-end visits along China's Ancient Silk Road.

Services:

- Welcome and departure meet and greet at Beijing airport
- Airfare Beijing– Urumqi – Kashgar – Urumqi – Beijing with Chinese commercial airlines
- Luggage service
- Tour guidance in English, French and Chinese (other languages upon request)
- Astronomical lectures
- Local guides
- Lodging in 2, 3 or 4 star hotels, depending on location. 2 nights in yurts at lake Karakul and 2 nights lodging at Eclipse-City in Kazakh yurts (2-3 star hotel equivalent) or 3-4 star hotel in Balikun. Single supplement applies (+350 Euros). Sleeping in Kazakh yurts sleeps parties of 10 on clean beds with mattresses, bed sheets and pillows. If you want to have your own yurt, please ask for our special VIP tents.
- Full board (breakfast, lunch and warm dinner), hot and cold drinks, alcoholic beverages during Eclipse Gala Dinner
- Local transportation on state-of-the-art local tourist busses
- Eclipse shades
- Invitation for Chinese visa application
- Information material
- 100 Euros voucher on your next booking on an Eclipse-City program to Iwo Jima in 2009

Optional:

- Camel tour from Eclipse-City
- Horse back riding
- Hot air ballooning from Eclipse-City
- Internet access at Eclipse-City

We can not guarantee any of optional extra services will be available during your stay.

Excludes:

- Visa arrangements and costs
- Travel and Medical Insurance
- Alcoholic drinks (included during Gala Dinner)
- Passports need to have at least 6 months validity when entering/leaving China
- Eclipse-City cannot be held liable for any - though unlikely - unexpected weather changes.

**Place your bookings now, limited availability**

---

## **Payment Terms and Conditions**

### **Individual sale**

1. 50% deposit upon receipt of reservation
2. 50% balance by 15 March 2008

### **Group Sale with allotment**

1. 50% Group Deposit upon signature of contract
2. Balance of payment by 15 April 2008

## **Cancellation Terms and Conditions**

### **Individual sale**

10% cancellation fee from 15 March 2007 - 31 December 2007

50% cancellation fee from 1 January 2008 – 15 March 2008

75% cancellation fee from 16 March 2008 – 30 June 2008

100% cancellation fee from 1 July 2008

Name changes permitted up to 1 July 2008, subject to:

Name change policy of airline applies, where flight bookings have been made. Visa needs to be issued

### **Group sale**

10% cancellation fee from 15 March 2007 - 31 December 2007

50% cancellation fee from 1 January 2008 – 15 April 2008

75% cancellation fee from 16 April 2008 – 30 June 2008

100% cancellation fee from 1 July 2008

Name changes permitted up to 1 July 2008, subject to:

Name change policy of airline applies, where flight bookings have been made. Visa needs to be issued

## **Meals**

Regardless of the package you have booked, all Eclipse-City guests will be provided with full board.

A large team of local and international staff will prepare Chinese and international dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For all those guests requiring a special dietary treatment, we do encourage you to clearly specify your requirements in writing, when booking your Eclipse-City trip.



---

## **Transport to and from Eclipse-City**

Eclipse-City will provide for full transport with state-of-the-art local transport.

If you require a special "out of program schedule" transport to/from the viewing site, please request it in writing to [VIP@eclipse-city.com](mailto:VIP@eclipse-city.com). We will try to satisfy all your special requirements.

A Jet Fuel Surcharge applies for Program 1D if oil prices increase.

## **Security and personal safety**

Your security and personal safety is our primary duty!

What have we done so far and what can you expect:

- Before issuing this program, we have made sure to have Xinjiang and Gansu Secretaries of Tourism officially endorsing our program.
- Eclipse-City is expecting and prepared to see and receive other eclipse-viewing visitors. Everyone else not registered at Eclipse-City, will not be permitted nor have physical access to the City. Private security services will be guarding the camp, our guests and all your valuables.
- Eclipse-City is prepared to treat minor emergencies in a special conditioned medical tent, including specialized staff. Included in your package are complimentary medical treatments, such as sunburn, insect bites, gastro-intestinal disturbances.

Eclipse-City Ltd.  
June 2007

NOTE: Our published terms and conditions apply